

The Great Sacrifice.

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BEING THE
SUBSTANCE
OF A
DISCOURSE

Delivered in BATH,

In the YEAR 1753.

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By JOHN CENNICK.

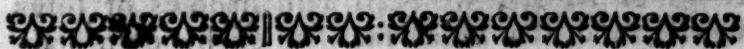
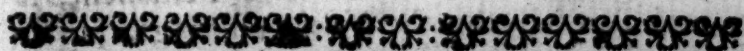
“ We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,” Heb. x. 10. “ Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” 1 Cor. v. 7. “ He has reconciled us in the body of his flesh, through death,” Col. i. 21, 22. “ And this he did when he offered up himself.” Heb. vii. 27.

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HEB. ix. 26.

“ Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

HE antients differed very much about the author of this epistle, and though the most believed it to be St. Paul's, yet there are others who think it was wrote by Barnabas, and some few by St. Luke.

Most of the christian churches receive it as the work of the former, but whoever was the writer, it is certain, that we have not a more blessed part of the holy scriptures than this, and which is, as it were, a key to the whole Mosaical dispensation.

Whoever reads it, must see that the intent of the whole is, if possible, to remove what stumbled and offended the Jews in the person of our Saviour, and to prove out of the law and the prophets, and also out of the Psalms, that the Messiah should be God Almighty, that he should become man and die for his people, and by invin-

cible arguments out of the Old Testament, is proved that all the sacrifices, offerings, priesthood, laws and worship, ordained from the times of Moses, were all but shadows of Jesus Christ, and the great sacrifice of his own body offered once for all.

This is the aim of the whole epistle, and the language of the author throughout, betrays an earnest desire of the salvation of the Hebrews, or Jews, to whom it is dedicated; and also the Holy Ghost intends thereby to give us light into the offering of the Lamb of God, and to inspire us with the certainty of his priesthood and power to absolve from sin, that we might come to him and be saved, and be firm and eternal followers of this great Apostle of our profession, whose sacrifice is our hope and glory to all eternity.

If I speak of this text in order, then I must,

1st, Shew who he is who appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

2dly, What is meant by his appearing.

3dly, What the apostle would have us understand by his having come "now in the end of the world."

4thly, To shew how he hath "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and to this head belongs the doctrine of his priesthood.

Lastly, I will shew what benefits we now receive through the sacrifice of Christ, and in what sense

sense we are priests to him upon earth, and attend to him in quality of servants, about his altar.

Of the first head I shall speak but a little in this place, because the chief matter which now must be considered, is the doctrine of his offering up his own Self to put away sin; but so much is needful to say, though I have often repeated it in many other discourses, and which can never too much be preached, that this Person of whom the whole epistle treats as well as all the scripture, is Jesus Christ the God of all the earth, the Lord from heaven, and who is very and essential God, equal to the Father, and his express image and substance, and the same with the Holy Spirit in the blessed Trinity from everlasting and to everlasting JEHOVAH. This has an unshaken foundation in the bible, and if any word in that book be true, then is this doctrine true, that Jesus the Son of Mary, who died upon the cross, in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, at Jerusalem, is the Son of the living God. Amen. Be it so. Amen and Amen.

But what is meant in the second place by his appearing, since God often appeared; and we read frequently all through the prophets, how the Lord appeared to them, and they saw his similitude, and spoke with him face to face? The weight of this expression does not then lie herein, that he has appeared, though that really is amazing and awful, that the invisible and incomprehensible Jehovah has often spoke and appeared to his servants and church; but this is now to be understood, that this last time, he has appeared in the mean form of a servant, and as a man. When he appeared formerly, he did it in the form of an angel, or
some-

sometimes as a king sitting upon his throne with all his hosts adoring at his right hand and at his left hand, with the seraphims covering up their faces in their wings before him, and crying, holy, holy, holy is the Lord : And at other times, as the Antient of days, reverend and full of majesty; with ten thousand times ten thousand ministering to him; and often only in a pillar of fire, in a cloud, in glory, in great light, &c. But now, he who reared the noble arch of heaven, and built the house eternal, appears in the form of a carpenter, and he who made all things, and was before all beings, appears in the form of a new-born babe, and is found in a manger. He that was and is the immortal and unchangeable, appears in the form of sinful flesh, lower than the Father, lower than the angels, lower than any man, the very scorn of men and the outcast of the people. And wherefore has he so humbled himself? why has he so appeared? "For the suffering of death." When sin abounded and reigned in the world over all flesh, and none in heaven or earth, or under the earth, could help or deliver man out of his cursed and perishing condition, or make a sacrifice for sin, or offer up an atonement and make reconciliation, he that sat upon the throne said, "Lo! I come!" In the body of his flesh, he said, "I will do thy will, O my God!" I will lay down my life and die, and be offered up as lamb for my sinful people, and so will end all mischief, and make peace. Hence he is called, "The Lamb slain from the foundations of the world;" and hence properly he merits that title, "The Lamb of God."

But what are we to understand by that part of the text, "he has now appeared in the end of the world?"

world?" for this is the third thing to be spoken of.

The fathers even before Christ, and much more since his incarnation, have divided the world into three parts: The beginning of the world was from Adam until Moses, and this was about two thousand years. In this time every father was priest to his own family; and though sacrifices were offered, and prayers made to the Lord, the divine service was not so regulated as that all should be the pattern perfectly of that which was to come. In this time God spoke to the fathers by visions, by dreams, voices, and in sundry kinds of manners; and to these he revealed the future salvation, and redemption by the sacrifice, or "bruising of the Seed of the woman," thro' the Holy Ghost, and "afar off they saw his day and were glad:" "They died in faith, and God was not ashamed to be called their God; yet, tho' they perhaps more innocently and freely escaped the depths of satan at that time, they did not see the salvation clearly, as in after ages; but the righteous men and kings, &c. wished to see the days of the Son of Man which we see, but did not see them. They desired to hear what we hear, but did not hear it. Thus it was in the first part of the world.

The second dispensation began in Moses's time, when the children of Israel were servants under the Egyptians in a strange land, and when many of them had mingled with the heathens and learned their works. Now God raised up his servants, Moses and Aaron to be their saviours, and by these he led them out "with a high hand and with a stretched-out arm," having shewn his wonders and terrors in Egypt; and when he had brought them

them through the deep of the sea into the land of the wilderness, he gave them the law and appointed the priesthood, regulated the order of the sacrifices, and sprinkling of blood, &c. This was called, the first covenant or Old Testament, and was sealed with the blood of bulls and goats, and to continue as a shadow 'till the seed of the woman, i. e. Christ should come: For Moses had been forty days in the mount with God, and had been shewn all the process of the redemption, how the Lord would become flesh, and like a lamb be offered up for sin upon the wood; how his misery and the wrath of God shall burn like a fire; how he should spread out his hands, in his high-priest's manner, and make intercession for the transgressors, and then sprinkle the people from their sin with his own blood; and hence Moses was charged "to make and constitute all things according to the pattern shewed him in the mount," Exod. xxv. 40. and no wonder that hence we find the same faithful servant of God repeat it in the book of the law. "All these words the Lord commanded Moses," In this time God also spake by visions, by Urim and Thummim, &c. to the prophets, by whom the gospel was more clearly seen into; and as the days of the Son of Man drew nearer, so they spake not as men who saw afar off. It is therefore we find in the prophets so much of the pure gospel, and such clear things of the Person, Godhead, and sufferings of the Lamb. But under the law, which lasted also about two thousand years, the most common way of preaching Christ, was in the sacrifices, which were offered daily, morning and evening, besides at other times of the new moons, solemn feasts, and days of expiation, and cele-

celebrating the feast of the passover. Here the manner of killing the lambs, offering up their bodies, the dress of the priests, the form of laying their hands upon the heads of the beasts, their washing their feet, sprinkling of blood and water, &c. are to be nicely observed, for they were exact figures of the offering up of the body of the true Lamb, who took away our sins in his death, and the sins of the whole world. This manner of divine service was continued till Jesus appeared, or as it is written of him, "until the Lord himself came into his temple," and thereby made the glory of the latter house to exceed the glory of the first, and this is the middle part of the world.

The end of the world is from Christ's sacrifice, to his second appearance on the clouds of heaven, when the mystery of God shall be finished. These days are called the latter days, by Joe', and by St John when he saith, "this is the last time;" and in our text when the apostle says, "Now in the end of the world has God our Saviour appeared to put away sin." So justly may it be termed the last days, or end of the world, that we may be sure no other dispensation shall follow, no other change of doctrine or revelation, till Jesus is revealed from heaven in flaming fire: For, "in these last days, God has spoken to us by his Son;" not afar off, as to the fathers, not darkly as by Moses, but plainly, that we may hold fast his words 'till he comes, and every eye shall see him. How long he may delay his coming, or if according to our ideas, or manner of measuring time, he may come quickly, we do not know. It is our time now to have our lamps lighted, and we dressed with our wedding-garments, knowing it is the end of the world, that

if he come suddenly at evening, or midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning, we may be ready to meet him with joy.

I come now, in the 4th place, to shew how "he has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and to speak of the priesthood of him who once offered up his own body for us.

The high-priest, under the law, was chosen out from among the people, and appointed for a year; and this was to signify that our High-Priest should be a man like to his brethren, tempted and tried with infirmities like them, that he might help us when we are tempted, and that we may not be terrified with his presence, and fly from him as at Sinai. Again, he was obliged to be separate from women at the time of ministration; to signify that Jesus should be a pure and undefiled virgin. Again, three days before the high-priest sacrificed he was ordered to wash his cloaths, and this Jesus did when, the third day before he offered up himself, he washed his raiment in a bloody sweat, and with which he now stands before the throne, namely, with his vesture dipped in blood. The high-priest was also ordered to wear upon his head a crown or mitre, and was deemed royal: and more, the name of Jehovah was wrote thereon, intimating, that the true High-Priest should be royal: "The King of kings, upon whose head are many crowns, and the name of the Lord is called upon him." Who so looketh upon him may bow down without fear of sacrilege, and worship and adore him, who is verily and truly the Lord. Again, the priest's vestment was a white ephod or surplice, which was a shadow of righteousness, but it reached only to the knees, to shew that the righteousness

teousness of the law was not perfect; and therefore John says, "Jesus had a white garment down to the foot," because his righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and complete and perfect; and this is the white linen, the righteousness of the saints. Over this ephod the priests of Moses put on a robe embroidered with purple, blue, scarlet and gold; and this made him appear glorious in his apparel. So glorious did the King of Israel look in the day when he made the great oblation on the hills without the gates of Jerusalem. When he was stripped naked before all, and began his priestly office: when the scarlet blood, the purple wounds, and black and blue bruises mingled like embroidered work over his whole body. These wounds shine brighter than gold, and are dearer to his people, and more precious, than the finest gold of Ophir. But upon the priest's breast he wore the names of the children of Israel, engraved on precious stones; and this was done to shew how our High-Priest should have us graven upon his breast: The nails and spear have wrote our names on his hands, and on the precious stone of his heart. Therefore can it be said with all propriety, "our names are written in heaven?" The priests among the Jews had the sole care of offering up the sacrifice, laying their hands on the head of the victim, and praying for the people for whom it was offered, and pronouncing them blessed, &c. So Jesus was the sole contriver of the offering of which we speak: He prepared the body; He, the Lord God, provided the Lamb; he washed it in blood and water; he salted the sacrifice with briny and salt tears; he laid upon it the iniquities of us all, and laid down his own life; he spread his hands toward heaven, and made

the intercession for sinners ; he entered the holy place with his own blood, to appear in the presence of God for us (as the high-priest of the Jews, once a year, went into the holy of holies with the blood of others) ; and he only pronounces us absolved and pardoned, when he sprinkles his own blood on our hearts, and says, " This is the blood of the New Testament, which was shed for you and for many, for the remission of sin," But before ever the high-priest, after the order of Aaron, could minister, he was anointed with oil and consecrated in the most solemn manner ; so Jesus, the Man Christ Jesus, was anointed above his fellows ; the Holy Spirit was poured out upon him without measure, and he also was consecrated with an oath, " the Lord sware and will not repent : Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Three things are found in our Saviour to qualify him to be a good high-priest, and such as suited with us : 1. He is God, and able to save to the uttermost. There is not a soul under heaven, who comes to him, however spoiled or undone, but he can absolve and forgive him. 2. He is the Son of Man, and to whom we may apply as to our brother. He is merciful and tender-hearted, and like as when he was in all his glory, he could not bear to see us lost, but was grieved to the heart at our fall, and came down to help us ; so now he has felt all our miseries and poor estate, he cannot send us empty away from him. 3. He is not like a priest after the order of Aaron, that by reason of death must cease to minister to our necessities, but he has an everlasting priesthood. He dieth no more. He lives for ever, and is a priest for evermore. Now, as well as on the very day of his sufferings, is he able to save ;

save; and his cries, and tears, and wounds, and blood, and death, have the same availing effect before the throne, and on the golden altar, as if now the smok of his torment ascended up from the earth before the face of the Lord.

But now I must speak of the sacrifice, the burnt-offering which he made once for all. As in the day of expiation the sins of the whole house of Israel were laid on the head of the scape goat, and he was then brought out of their gates bearing away the sin; so when God our High-Priest knew the fulness of the time was come, he prepared also a victim, and laid on him the sin of the world. The whole blessed Trinity were one at this solemn and striking transaction, and officiated. The day of the feast of expiation was come; the day of the true passover, and on that very night whereon the Jews killed the paschal lamb, was our Passover slain. God Almighty took the sin of the first Adam, with all its dreadful and shocking consequences and effects, all the curse and chastisement due to the whole, and all our hurt, and laid the burden on the body and soul of Jesus. Therefore was he dumb before the rulers, and opened not his mouth: He saith, "O God, it was thy doing." He was therefore represented on that day as a goat in the law, and we know the reason: For a goat was the figure of a wicked man as the sheep was of one innocent: And on this account it is that the scripture saith, "He was reckoned with transgressors." He was esteemed the greatest sinner that ever was, and black, and loaden with the crimes and misdemeanors of all the nations: Yea, "God made him to become sin for us, who knew no sin;" and heaped, as it were together,
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in him all evil, that in his death all might die, and the law be entirely fulfilled, and its revengeful spirit satisfied. Thus stood the second Adam, the Head and Representative of the whole race before the Jewish high-priest, who by the Holy Ghost confesses, "It is better that this Man die, and the whole nation perish not." When this was said, the Jewish priesthood ceased for ever, and the type was no more; and now Jesus was set at nought and given into the hands of wicked men, who were as the Levites, and took their office, and prepared the Lamb for his offering. Then, that the scripture might be fulfilled, "thou shalt shed the blood upon the ground." It is the blood which maketh the atonement for the soul. They began to wound and cut the Lamb of God. The thorns tore his head, and the scourges his back; and in this cruel and mangled plight they dragged him out, the true scape Goat, the true Lamb of God to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The sacrifices had commonly been made upon the hills, and the chiefest on the mount Sion; but this Sacrifice was made on mount Calvary. The cross was the altar, and the nails served for knives to wound him to death. It was a custom among the Jews while the sacrifice was killing, and at the time of the setting fire to the wood to burn it, for all the priests and Levites to blow their trumpets toward heaven, and all the people shouted for joy; but instead thereof, at the dying of Jesus, all the harpers harped upon their harps, and all the angels of heaven blow their trumpets to the Lamb, while below all the spectators shouted with cruel joy. Here must be observed also another custom of the Jews at the feast of expiation, namely, when the high-priest had killed the bullock

bullock and goat, he took and sprinkled their blood towards the mercy-seat seven times; and thus did our good High-priest: for just so many times he sprinkled his own blood towards heaven: 1. When he was scourged: 2. When he was crowned with thorns: 3. When one hand was pierced: 4. When the other was also so cut through: 5. When one foot was wounded: 6. When the other was bored in like manner: And 7. When his side was opened. Thus our High Priest made the atonement, and sprinkled seven times the true blood for expiation of sin, on the great day of his sacrifice. Three hours, at least, he wept and bled, and suffered upon the altar, pouring out strong cries and tears, and with his hands spread towards heaven: And all known and unknown pangs he sustained: until the smock of his warm wreaking blood came up for an everlasting remembrance before God, and until he had fully endured the chastisement and curse of the world, and made an amends for all done amiss; and then knowing all things were accomplished which were written concerning him, "he bowed down his head and gave up the ghost." There hung the Ransom-Price just like a lamb; his legs red with pain, his heart melted, and he so besmeared and covered over with blood, that he really appeared like a burnt-offering. This dying of God's only Child, this free-will offering of his body once for all, had such an effect in heaven, that (though millions of bullocks, rams, goats, and calves of a year old, with rivers of oil and sweet spices, had been offered before him for four thousand years in vain, and without being able to wash away one sin, or make reconciliation) now the Most High was so pleased,
his

his law so fulfilled, and his justice so satisfied, that for the sake of this Sacrifice, and on the sole account of this Oblation, he passed the general pardon, sin ceased before his face, and the curse vanished; so that calling the things that were not as though they were, and foreseeing what an effect this should have in its due time, he again pronounced the world and lost man, "Very good." Thus then sin was put away, and thus Jesus the Lamb of God carried it into the wilderness, into the land of forgetfulness, that God might remember it no more. Thus was Jesus the true scape Goat, the Lamb of God which took away the sin of the world.

I come in the last place to shew what benefits we now receive by this Sacrifice, and in what sense "we are priests to God and the Lamb upon earth." Many receive this glorious doctrine of redemption by the Sacrifice of Christ in theory, and yet I fear have had nothing really and indeed in the hearts of the amazing and deep benefits of this Sacrifice. The sacrifices of the Old Testament could indeed strike and affect them who looked on, and the shedding of blood has always spoke, but those sacrifices did not cleanse the conscience, or make the comers thereunto perfect. Guilt still remained upon those that offered them, and upon those for whom they were offered; because it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, or quench the divine wrath; and this David knew when he confessed, "sacrifices and offerings thou wouldst not, neither hast thou pleasure therein;" and for which cause Jesus saith, "but a body hast thou prepared me, lo! I come to do thy will." In this therefore the sacrifice of Christ transcends all other: His blood purges the consciences of those who by faith
look

look on, and his blood speaks peace and pardon in the hearts of such as come and behold him crucified. The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, and who comes in the name of Jesus, takes the blood of the New Testament and besprinkles body and soul, so that we who believe can say, "I have found redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." And this is no fancy, no bare reflection or meditation; but as certainly as we have once felt the intolerable weight of sin, and known our guilt, so certainly do we know we are pardoned by the offering up of the body of Christ for us. We have been up at his sacrifice, we have been washed in the laver of his blood and water, and have now our epochs clean and white, and stand round about his altar with linen garments, kings and priests to our God. As it was the office of the priests formerly to offer their prayers while the smoak of the sacrifice went up toward heaven, so we offer all our prayers and praises in the smoak of the torment of Jesus Christ: we know nothing is sweet till perfumed with this incense; nothing is hallowed or sanctified, but as it is laid on this Golden Altar, and sprinkled with this blood. Again, as the priests formerly sung and blew trumpets all the while the sacrifice burned; so all our hymns and songs of praise are nothing else but a solemn thanksgiving; that by the sacrifice of Christ all our sins are remitted and pardoned, and blotted out, and put away. On this account we sing with such inconceivable pleasure of his death, of his wounds, and how he poured out his soul. We know how we, who once feared to approach the throne of God because we were unclean, now can come boldly and minister in our white garments without fear. This is our office as long as we are in the world, and this we shall not

cease to do when in heaven. To us who believe, and have our sins put away, it is given to be present with the Lamb, and to stand so in faith, as if we were among the multitude who were his murderers. We are his witnesses, as if we had seen him die; and while others deride and mock, or slight and despise the Lamb, we worship and minister to him. Our whole business for ever is to plead and offer his death and sacrifice before God, and to blow our trumpets in his praise to the world, and before all the first-born; and in this we do nothing more than mingle with that innumerable company, who now are bowing before him, as he sits upon his throne stained with his own blood, in the office of the High Priest over the whole house of God, and thank and bless him in their language; for we, as well as all the rest now with him, have been redeemed and ransomed by him. "Therefore with angels and archangels, and all the goodly company of heaven, we worship him that sits upon the throne, even the Lamb that was slain, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord, and blessed be his name for ever and ever. Amen."

An H Y M N.

I.

O JESUS, Son of God!
 Who lov'd the world so dear,
 That thou, to save 't, in flesh and blood
 Didst in the world appear:
 With tears of thankfulness
 Our souls remember thee,
 In all thy weakness and disgrace,
 And pain and misery.

II.

Thee on that night we view,
 When Judas thee betray'd:
 We see thee with the soldiers go,
 With all thy raiment red:
 For with thy bloody sweats,
 Thy cloaths, thou Child divine!
 Appear'd like those who tread the fats,
 And roll their cloaths in wine.

III.

Soon thorns thy temples crown'd,
 Then scourg'd before the crowd,
 'Till streams of blood from ev'ry wound
 Down thy dear body flow'd:
 When sore thy flesh was hewn,
 That ev'n the bones were seen,
 Then wast thou to thy people shewn;
 One cry'd, "Behold the Man!"

IV.

Thy pain here ended not,
 Thou yet thy cloaths must wear,
 And on these shoulders, raw and cut,
 Thy heavy cross must bear:

Then

Then down didst meekly lay,
(O dearest Lamb of God!)
And let them tear thy cloaths away,
And with them skin and blood.

V.

Thy hands and feet they tore;
Then nail'd thee on the tree;
O then what grief didst thou endure;
What pain and misery!
Oppress'd unspeakably
With all mankind's misdeeds;
All unbelief and misery!
Behold! he hangs and bleeds.

VI.

Three long and bitter hours
He groan'd and cry'd aloud;
The rulers of infernal pow'rs
So long afflicted God:
Then fell beneath their stroke
The Prince and Lord of all!
And down death, hell, and sin he broke
In his amazing fall!

VII.

Thus he for sin aton'd,
Thus paid the ransom-price;
And thus the Lamb of God was bound,
And made a sacrifice:
Salvation to the Lamb!
Through heav'n immediate rung:
Salvation to Immanuel's name!
Shall ever be our song.

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F I N I S.